

Environmental Justice Collaborative Problem-Solving Grant Awards 2003

Selected for Award

EPA Grant ID: EQ-831557-01-0 Grant Application ID 2003016 EPA Region: 10 State: WA
Indochinese Cultural and Service Center (ICSC)

Asian Pacific Islander Environmental Awareness Project

Issue

According to the 2000 Census in Pierce County, the Asian Pacific Islander population is 57,959. There are 20 or so sewer outfalls along the eastern shore of Puget Sound. There is also industrial discharge and runoff from freeways and parking lots that have lead and other contaminants. This pollution contributes to high levels of mercury in the shellfish in the area that the Asian Pacific Islander community depends on for subsistence shellfish harvesting. Traditions, cultural differences, and misunderstandings have been identified as primary causes for many of the unsafe environmental practices among API communities. Paralytic shellfish poisoning pose serious health risks to SE Asian communities. For example, in August 2000, 9 Cambodian workers were hospitalized after eating mussels from a closed area on the Puget Sound.

Environmental Statutes

1. Clean Water Act, Section 104(b)(3)
2. Toxic Substances Control Act, Section 10(a)
3. Marine Protection, Research, and Sanctuaries Act, Section 203

Goals

Building and sustaining strong working relationships among partners will be through the development of mechanisms that facilitate the provision of safe and sustainable harvesting practices and safe fish consumption. This will be done by increasing public awareness of dangers from mercury poisoning, unsafe harvesting practices, and non-point sources of pollution – including mercury and hazardous waste disposal, and build the capacity of the community to reduce exposure to these health risks.

Project

Establishment of Beach Monitoring and Closure Management Plan. This will include a Public Information and Notification Initiative described as public meetings, beach postings, public announcements, and other control mechanisms. Activities as part of the Management Plan include bio-toxin monitoring and sampling, training (rules and regulations for safe harvesting, sample collection, etc.), and sustainable harvesting.

Partnership

Korean Women's Association, Tacoma Pierce County Health Department, State of Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, State of Washington Department of Health, Puget Sound Action team. Government partners including the Washington State Department of Health which has reported the need to have access to the API communities, as their traditional methodology of providing information is largely ineffective with Limited English Speaking communities.

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